



Preservation Hotline #4

South Carolina Department of
Archives & History
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State Historic
Preservation Office

Preparing the historic resources element of the comprehensive plan

A comprehensive plan includes information on population trends, the economic base (labor force), natural resources, historic resources, community facilities (transportation, water, sewer, fire, medical, schools, etc), housing and land use. In a comprehensive plan, the historic resources include such aspects of the built environment as historic buildings and structures, commercial and residential historic districts, unique natural or scenic resources and archaeological or other cultural resources.

The local planning commission is responsible for developing and maintaining a systematic planning process that includes the information needed to guide the development of its area of jurisdiction.

The basic planning process includes:

- 1 an inventory of existing conditions and future projections,
- 2 a statement of needs and goals, and
- 3 implementation strategies with time frames.

Parts of a comprehensive plan may be prepared by different groups varying from professional planners to interested citizens. The part concerned with historic resources is often called the preservation plan and it focuses on the historic buildings, neighborhoods and landscapes, such as avenues of trees and parks or monuments — those features that reflect the community's history. Historic districts give a community its sense of place and the older neighborhoods often provide attractive residential areas and commercial downtowns that attract both citizens and newcomers. A preservation plan also may include an archaeological component that identifies known and likely archaeological sites that could provide information about the community in early historic and prehistoric times.

Public participation is a vital part of a successful preservation plan. Citizen involvement in the formation of the plan results in public understanding and support

for the implementation strategies necessary to protect the historic properties. Conducting public meetings during the development of the plan and at the conclusion of the planning process to report on the plan is usually effective. Public meetings can be used to provide information about things like:

- historic resources and their significance
- development pressures and other forces like declining economic conditions, which threaten historic resources
- opportunities to use historic properties to reach other community goals such as housing, tourism or economic revitalization
- community values regarding quality of life issues.

Steps of a model community preservation plan

When historic preservation planning is part of a larger planning effort, some steps, such as the goals, are included as part of the comprehensive plan. If the preservation plan for historic resources exists as a separate document, it should always be part of overall community planning and development. The process set out on the back of this page outlines steps communities of any size can follow in developing a historic preservation plan.

Sources of information and help

The SHPO helps communities in the state. It maintains an inventory of historic resources and offers competitive grants and technical help for community preservation, including planning, writing preservation ordinances, surveying and evaluating historic properties, preparing National Register nominations, developing protection strategies, and conducting community education and information projects.

For more information call 803-896-6172.

See the list of steps for a model community preservation plan on reverse side. . .

Steps of a model community preservation plan

1. Establish a vision planning process that includes:

- ▶ Developing community consensus on goals and priorities for preserving the community's character and historic resources
- ▶ Evaluating current trends and influences on historic resources by analyzing population change and demographics, economic environment, current land use, housing stock, transportation, infrastructure, and other community changes; opportunities for historic preservation; and obstacles to preserving local historic resources

2. Identify local historic resources by:

- ▶ Developing an area analysis in step 1 above
- ▶ Reviewing the community history, noting the distinctive aspects of local prehistory, history and historic resources
- ▶ Conducting a preliminary survey of historic resources.

3. Identify strategies to achieve community preservation goals, such as:

- ▶ Conducting a field survey of historic resources
- ▶ Evaluating the historic properties according to established criteria
- ▶ Designating local historic resources
- ▶ Establishing legal and regulatory protection
- ▶ Creating or publicizing financial incentives
- ▶ Using community development, downtown or neighborhood revitalization programs (Main Street, Small Towns, LEAP, Palmetto Leadership, etc. . . .)
- ▶ Increasing community awareness of historic resources
- ▶ Other tools designed to meet an individual community's needs

4. Develop and implement an action plan by:

- ▶ Selecting the tools and strategies best suited to the community's goals and objectives
- ▶ Setting priorities
- ▶ Establishing time periods for projects with project completion dates
- ▶ Selecting reliable project leaders and developing future leaders

To learn what data is available on historic and cultural properties or to learn more about the strategies listed above, visit www.state.sc.us/scdah/histcrepl.htm.

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